



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIVISION

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Four Honored With Courageous Citizen Awards

LOS ANGELES – District Attorney Jackie Lacey will honor today two men who restrained a hammer-wielding purse snatcher as he bludgeoned his 60-year-old female victim.

Two others – including a female jogger who chased after a burglar carrying a pillowcase full of loot from her neighbor's house -- also will be recognized at a Courageous Citizen Awards luncheon from noon to 1:30 p.m. at The University Club of Pasadena, 175 North Oakland Ave. The event will be hosted by the Rotary Club of Pasadena.

"These four people helped a crime victim during a terrifying moment of need and are vital to the pursuit of justice," District Attorney Lacey said. "Our community is a safer place because of them."

Hoa "Tony" Luong, 21, and Michael Lee, 35, will receive Courageous Citizen Awards for assisting a woman struck in the back of the head with a 13-oz. claw hammer as she was walking in a Monterey Park residential neighborhood on Nov. 18, 2012.

When Luong, of Rosemead, jumped to her aid, the woman's attacker brought the hammer down on his head during the struggle. That's when Monterey Park resident Lee jumped out of his car and rushed to help.

Lee kicked the hammer out of the suspect's hand, dragged the attacker into the street and pinned him to the ground until police arrived. The defendant was convicted of two counts of assault with a deadly weapon and one count of robbery and sentenced to eight years in state prison.

District Attorney Lacey also will recognize Madge Gaynor, 44, of Claremont. On the morning of June 22, 2012, Gaynor was out for her routine morning seven-mile run when she noticed a man lurking around her neighbor's front door.

Knowing that the neighbor was on vacation, Gaynor ran home to retrieve her cell phone then raced back to the neighbor's vacant home just as the suspect was leaving.

Gaynor's morning jog turned into a foot chase with the suspect, who ended up tossing a pillowcase full of stolen items, including a laptop computer and an I-Pod, into some bushes.

She continued to pursue the thief until police arrived and arrested him. Police retrieved \$1,100 worth of items. The defendant pleaded no contest to one count of first-degree residential burglary and was sentenced to two years in state prison.

Palmdale resident Joseph Fitzgerald, 62, was driving on San Fernando Road and Sunland Avenue on July 13, 2010, when he observed a pickup truck ram a Honda, pushing the smaller car into a parked vehicle.

Fitzgerald saw the Honda's female driver, who had a 2-year-old child with her, emerge from her car. But she immediately jumped back in her Honda as the male driver began beating on her window.

Fitzgerald noted the pickup truck's license plate, called 911 and then followed the truck as the driver pursued the woman's fleeing vehicle. Thanks to Fitzgerald, police apprehended the suspect, who turned out to be the woman's angry boyfriend.

The defendant pleaded no contest to one count of assault with a deadly weapon and was sentenced to five years of probation with 365 days in jail as a condition of probation.

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